

THE MORALIST.

Quod magis ad nos
Pertinet, et nescire malum est, agitamus.
HORACE.

What to ourselves pertains, we tell.—ANON.

No. 2.

MONDAY, JUNE 6, 1814.

THE town may take our word for it, and if they are not satisfied with that, let them peruse our numbers with attention, and they will soon be convinced, that in our friendly association there is not a single heart, which does not swell with love for the good natured, wise, and right merry inhabitants of this metropolis.

We hope and trust, that when time and opportunity shall improve our acquaintance, the young and the old, the gay and the sad, the handsome and the ugly, will now and then kindly inquire after our welfare. We do not indeed expect that young gentlemen will leave their sports, and misses their toilets, when we pass, but when they are informed that we can teach beaux how best to win the fair, and belles the true and sure means of securing to themselves good husbands, we may receive at least some small share of that attention, which is now be-

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stowed on Smith, the perfumer, and the far-famed Emperor Huggins.

Before we proceed, however, one step further in this concern, we must introduce ourselves *secundum artem*; for it is an indispensable law of ceremony that one man never knows another until he is formally introduced. This is a wise law, and we shall hereafter treat the public with an essay on the important accomplishment of *not knowing people*. And in that essay we shall prescribe rules for showing off the looks and attitudes of the art in the best way, with the most becoming dignity. But first, let us proceed to the formalities of an introduction.

Besides myself, there are six of us. At the head of our table, and the foremost in our ranks, is a real worthy and excellent old gentleman, known by the name of Alderman Rhinier De Ruyter. He traces his lineage in a direct line to that renowned De Ruyter, of Dutch memory, who defended his country with so much manhood against England in the days of the commonwealth.

It is a standing story with the Alderman, that his distinguished ancestor was a bold, enterprising, swearing Admiral, and that his constant oath was, whenever the flag of his country was insulted, "By the dykes of Holland, I'll Right her;" and hence

the English were in the habit of calling him "The Righter;" which the Dutch pronounced *De Ruyter*.

This is the only pun our friend was ever guilty of in his life; and we now understand it so perfectly well, that we always begin to laugh at it, long before it comes out.

His ancestors were amongst the early, though not the first settlers of this city; and there are oral traditions still current in the family, of bloody encounters with bears, wolves and Indians, in the neighborhood of the Coffee-House—a curious fact, which, as *De Ruyter* sometimes sarcastically remarks, may perhaps help our philosophers to account for certain fiery passions which are said to haunt the air over the same spot even to this distant day. His great grandfather used to say, that when he was a little boy, it was dangerous to venture into the woods as far as Tammany Hall, or Washington Hotel, on account of wild beasts.

According to family tradition, the *De Ruyters* lived in a princely style from the first settlement of the Island to the middle period of the life of Hermanus, the father of Rhinier, that is to say, they lived in a brick house built of materials imported from Amsterdam, with the end fronting the street, and ornamented in a masterly manner with iron figures as

long as a man, with little brick steps running up to a point, and topped by a rod and a filligree-vein turning with the wind.

About the time before mentioned, Hermanus became acquainted with a Yankee speculator, who, taking advantage of his honest simplicity, sold him an immense tract of land in Virginia, beautifully laid out into fifteen or twenty townships; in exchange for which, he obtained a mortgage on the fine house of Hermanus, and also on several substantial stores near the East river.

The speculation turned out rather badly, for it so happened, that the lands were on mountains too high for settlement, and besides, they were formidabley defended by bears and wolves, who had been in quiet possession, ever since they first settled this country, after the flood; so that no man in his senses would pretend to dispute their title.

From that time Hermanus De Ruyter grew uneasy, peevish and discontented; whereas, before he had been one of the most jolly, good natured, laugh-and-be-fat old Gentlemen, ever known in this city. Not a soul who feasted at his table, but declared him to be the very pink of politeness, and quintessence of good humour.

But his Virginian townships, became a sort of standing joke, and though no one dared to broach them to his face, yet sometimes he heard them mentioned when he suddenly turned the corner of a street. To complete his troubles the Speculator's mortgages were foreclosed, and he was literally on the brink of being turned out of house and home. To avoid this disgrace, he died—I believe, at least twenty years sooner than he would have done, had he not wished to end his days in the old paternal mansion.

At his death he left no other legacy to Rhinier but the boy's mother, a lady born and educated in Connecticut, three daughters, and this solemn injunction—"never mortgage good Amsterdam brick and mortar for wild lands, till you are sure you can get at them."

Rhinier applied himself to commerce, and with prudence, economy and natural talents for business, slowly and gradually became opulent, and retrieved not only the lost fortunes of his father, but gained a vast estate besides. He says the happiest moment of his life was, when he completed the purchase of the family seat, which for thirty years had continued in other hands.

He is a man whom we all respect and love, pos-

sessing somewhat of the characteristic silence of his nation; but whenever he is disposed to talk, we hear him with delight. Though he has one of the best, most confiding, and most benevolent hearts in the world, and though his wife, as well as his mother, was of Connecticut origin, he is, it must be confessed, a little suspicious of the Yankees, and especially of Yankee speculators.

De Ruyter has one eccentricity, and that is, his commercial enthusiasm. Trade, he says, is at once the pride and protection of a nation. It is to the political body, what blood is to the natural: stop its circulation, and the body dies. And I will do the Alderman the justice to declare, that he is not a mere man of business, but that he understands the subject from its first principles, to its remote tendencies. Of one thing I am certain, that when either of us attempts to oppose him in any of his opinions, he shows so much greater knowledge than we can boast, that we feel ourselves obliged to acquiesce or keep silence.

His integrity has gained him such confidence from the public, that merchants of even doubtful honesty, have trusted to him the decision of their most important disputes. So great was his reputation as an umpire, that the Lawyers began to look upon him with a malignant eye, and he has of late,

refused to arbitrate except for very particular friends, saying, that a merchant should never stand in the way of other people's commissions.

He was formerly much in the public service, being regularly returned Alderman of his ward, but of late years he has been left out. Though when measured by the old standard of qualification for office, uprightness and capacity, he was inferior to no man, it was discovered that there were other requisites, which he absolutely wanted. To attend ward meetings he peremptorily refused, and he once inadvertently hinted, that if the common people were left to themselves, they would vote quite as well as when their choice was dictated by their betters—by courtesy, however, he still retains the title of Alderman.

The next in worthiness and courteous respectability among us, is Richard Henry Carroll, Esquire, a Virginian by birth, familiarly addressed at our club, by the title of Duke.

He is very learned, hospitable and benevolent, and, although fifty years have rolled over his head and whitened his locks, every body admits, that in sprightliness, enthusiasm, warmth of heart, and generosity of soul, he is not surpassed by any gentleman north of the Potomac.

Notwithstanding he is a great enemy to titles, he answers with the utmost complacency to the appellation of Duke, and, to let you into another secret of his character, although he is proud of his plantation (which, with a hundred slaves, has descended from his ancestors,) he would instantly call any body to Hobuck, who should dare to question in his presence, the doctrine of liberty and equality.

He very judiciously observes, that all mankind are born **EQUAL**, and that in a free country, distinctions ought to be abolished. To which the Alderman always assents with a cordial and thundering thump of his fist upon the table, and a nod of his head, as much as to say, "*that's true Sir, that's very true;*" though both those gentlemen count upon their blacks, and both of them boast of their ancestors.

The Duke claims descent from Pocahontas, who, he says, was a greater character than Admiral De Ruyter. She had feeling, courage, honor, fidelity—she had all the manly virtues of the Admiral, combined with the softness, delicacy, and exquisite sensibility of a woman. It may with truth be said of her, that her heroism saved a nation, though she died for love. We know not what there may be among the Indians, but in New-York there are not more than five-

hundred ladies equal to Pocahontas. Such is the eulogy of the Duke on his great female ancestor. His constitution derives great benefit from the northern summer, and he arrives among us every year as regularly, as the birds of spring, and departs for the south about the same time they do. He is very fond of all public amusements, such as the theatre, horse-racing, cock-fighting, and visiting the *Springs*; in addition to this, he is a great stickler for the church.

He says the Theatre has degenerated very much within his recollection; for however incredible it may appear, he positively and roundly asserts, that he can very well remember, when good sense, and good acting, was quite as apt to draw a great house, as thunder and lightning and volcanoes are in these days. However, he is resolved that the drama shall not dwindle into a mere puppet show, if he can by any means prevent it, for he hopes by now and then a friendly hint to the rival managers, and a moderate castigation of the false public taste, which rather encourages horses and elephants, than poets and actors, that in time, an audience may hear a sensible play with tolerable patience, even though it have not the soothing aid of an earthquake or a tempest.

He says he attempted once to abolish blood and

thunder from the stage, but the ladies declared, that blood was absolutely very interesting, and that thunder was charming, because it always frightened them. Many a tuff-hearted beau has been overcome by the engaging trepidation of his mistress, as displayed in a beautiful stage thunder storm. And we truly suspect for that very reason the ladies still love earthquakes and volcanoes; having always an eye to business, even in the very storms of pleasure.

The Duke declares, that the law which prohibits gentlemen from smoking cygars at the theatre, ought to be promulgated in capitals a little less glaring, for he is clearly of opinion, that it is a sort of national slur; something like that edict of a distinguished court in Europe, by which all ladies at the assembly, were "forbidden to get drunk before nine o'clock."

When Cooke died, the Duke wore crape on his cane for a month, as a tribute of respect, but he says he shall soon congratulate the town on the very interesting circumstance of Cooke's place being most happily supplied by—a West Indian Rope Dancer, who can jump six foot higher than ever Cooke did in King Richard.

The Duke is very apt to boast of his horses, his

wife, his daughter, and his plantation—hence his title of Duke Ego. But he is a gentleman of most excellent good fellowship, quite orthodox in his principles, and generally practising what he professes; always excepting his Virginian plantation.

The next of my associates, is Colonel Fellows, whose life has been a mixture of strange and wayward incidents. He was a soldier of some distinction in the Revolution, altho very young; and at the close of the war he left America for France, on account of his attachment to La Fayette. When the fortune of that favorite of Washington began to decline, the Colonel found it unsafe for him to remain longer in the meridian of Paris. He fled therefore to a port in the Mediterranean, from which he embarked on board a Spanish vessel for America; and the day after his departure he was captured by an Algerine and carried into Tripoli, where he remained a prisoner until released by the gallantry of our American heroes.

Having in childhood heard and read much of the wonders of the East, and finding himself now in the neighborhood of that world of miracles, he resolved to roam a while among the curiosities of Persia, and personally to view the hills and valleys,

the rivers and cities of Syria, Palestine and Southern Asia.

We find him an inexhaustible source of information and amusement, and as he has frequently set us right in our ideas of Jews, Turks, Persians and Infidels, we make no doubt our readers will be delighted with his character, when they are more intimately acquainted with him.

He was not so wise as to measure the pyramids, nor did he count the ruins of Balbec or Palmyra; he knows to a certainty that trees, men, women and dogs, grow up and die under the shades of mount Carmel, very much as they do on the banks of the Hudson; and he declares solemnly, that the Tatars and Arabs have as sincere a desire to eat, drink, and live, as any of the most polished inhabitants of our civilized society.

These facts are related as instances, to shew that the Colonel is as expert at least as most of those travellers, who, now-a-days, write long-winded histories of their travels in America.

When the taste of the public shall be weary of viewing pictures of our own country, and of the habits and customs with which we are familiar, we shall take the liberty of introducing now and then a

story from some quarter of the East, with the Colonel for our guide.

In the province of the *beau-monde*, we shall derive much information and pleasure from the sprightly vivacity, and agreeable wit, of that essence of fashion and very pink of the ton, Henry Loiter, commonly called Sir Harry. He is descended from the ancient and very honorable family of the Loiters, who have been celebrated for the ease and affluence in which they have lived ever since the days of Columbus.

Being the heir of an independent fortune, he passes his days in the true style of a gentleman; and does little else but dress, eat, sleep, ride, smoke, make bets, walk up and down Broadway, visit the ladies, and tell the news. We have assigned to him the arduous task of reconnoitering for us at routs, balls, assemblies, and tea parties.

Sir Harry is intimately acquainted with the times, places, and pompous circumstances, of all trotting-matches, horse-races, pedestrian feats, jumping-matches, and heroic undertakings for eating and drinking against time.

He can tell you the life and history of every new fashion, the number of hours which it flourished,

how it was brought up, and when it expired. Nor does he engage in this highly important business with the frigid indifference of a common laborer; he lends his heart, head and soul, to his occupation; at least when he is not employed in some other way—and he goes through his narrations with an eye so clear, and a face so sparkling, that he has made himself quite the favorite of the ladies. We doubt whether he is wise enough to be Secretary at War, but without hesitation we declare, that he has superior qualifications for a member of Congress, because he can lounge as long, and talk as much to the purpose, as any orator that now-a-days excites the gaping astonishment of this most enlightened of all nations; and as he dresses with an exceeding good taste, we think he would make a most excellent General, to strut about this city, and protect the frontiers of the United States.

We have a particular regard for him on account of his unaffected good nature, and pleasing vivacity, which united to his light talk about the beau-monde and all that passes in it, to his wit, for he is certainly witty, and to some other good qualities of his head and heart, which will all be unfolded in reasonable time, renders him altogether a very useful and a very pleasant companion for men like us, whose desire is to see and hear every thing.

But the member of our club, who possesses the most learning of any of us, and who, I answer for him, will one day or other stand foremost in the ranks, provided genuine merit is ever rewarded in this world of favoritism, as it ought to be, is Theodore Precedent, Esquire, Counsellor at Law. He is one of the most indefatigable students of the age—really and truly deep read in books, and adroitly skilled in the lore of science. At the same time he condescends to pay a decent attention to his person and manners, and he talks with other people exactly as if they were human beings like himself. He supposes that a person may, by possibility, know Latin and Greek, and even Hebrew, and yet appear and act like a man of feeling and a gentleman—and he is just as civil to the Ladies, as if he thought they possessed souls like men, and understanding, like scholars of the highest degree.

With the most glowing admiration for our Statesmen, Philosophers, and Divines, I have heard him declare, that he thought he could trace errors up to the very best of them; though on this subject, he never fails to speak with the most guarded caution, and the profoundest respect. He is a steady attendant on our Courts of Justice, and frequently amuses us by his witty description of Lawyers, Aldermen, Justices, and Judges. If he sometimes notices the majestic insolence of an ill-bred mem-

ber of a court, and castigates the sycophantic servility of those polite gentry, who civilly smile at any rudeness from authority, he never fails to do it in such a way as to show his hearers, that he has no other object in view, but to promote the interests of the bench and the bar.

These are my Companions, and from the manner in which they are selected, and the provinces to which they are respectively assigned, the public will readily perceive, that, like good Generals of the old School, we have so arranged our plans as to have a spy in almost every corner of the town, who may collect and give us information of the world as it passes.